



Work and Aging: The Potential of Aging Workforce

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All regions of the world have experienced a considerable increase in life expectancy from 1950 to the present.^{1,2} Population aging is about to become one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, with consequences in almost all sectors of society, including the labor and financial markets and the demand for goods and services (housing, transportation, social protection), as well as for family structure and intergenerational ties.³⁻⁵ Older people are increasingly perceived as elements that contribute to development; it is considered that their abilities to improve themselves and society should be integrated into public policies and programs at all levels.⁶⁻⁸ In the coming decades, many countries will be under fiscal and political pressures due to the healthcare, pension, and social protection needs of this growing population group.^{9,10} Society has been encountering aging without even having been able to reflect on it, not only collectively, but even individually. There are very few individuals who plan their old age from both a residential/housing perspective and from a retirement perspective. This is perhaps why levels of vulnerability in mental health and suffering from stress increase as we age or decide to retire from working life. Although the family must play a transcendental role as an emotional reference network, it is necessary to rethink the workforce of older adults. To do this, it is necessary to rethink retirements without losing the right to them but rather with the sole objective of supporting healthy aging. Currently, there are scientific publications that demonstrate the increase in the ability to obtain results and goals met when work teams are inclusive, with the age difference being the constant of their configuration.^{11,12} The film "The intern" clearly demonstrates this need and good synergy. However, it is key how loved ones, family or not, who surround older adult's functions in this sense. This emotional network can provide feelings of rootedness, security, capacity usefulness, self-esteem, confidence and social support, among others, to the older adult.^{11,13} Although it is considered that the way of aging is 25% determined

by genetic factors, this means that a person whose ancestors have been long-lived also has the possibility of being long-lived. The rest, that is, 75%, is determined by habits and environmental factors.⁵ Work is a very important environmental factor for the self-esteem of older adults.^{11,13} Many times it is not about continuing in the same type of work, but basically about understanding that retirement can mean a change of perspective in identity, with this older adult finding talents that he had forgotten or that he never cultivated. Discussing the topic of old age, aging and the sustainability of older adults with the family usually generates emotions that make it difficult to talk about it naturally.^{7,11} Knowing that fathers, mothers or grandparents will express their fears can be distressing, since they have often been an economic pillar of this emotional network and have helped and listened when they were needed. Therefore, the exchange of roles can be difficult to assimilate.¹⁴ Talking about aging forces us to face our own fears about aging. Some institution talks about the 70/40 rule: if the family member turned 70 or older and their children or emotional references are 40 or older, the time has come to have that conversation.¹⁵

Why do we have to talk about the future with the elderly?

- **Plan your own aging:** Talking about aging and collaborating in organizing the lives of the elderly involves thinking about aging itself and its preparation.
- **Empowerment and dignity of the elderly:** When family support and the certain possibility of maintaining some employments are observed, the elderly person feels that they can continue to have control over their life, without losing sight of a certain increase in their own vulnerability.^{9,15}
- **Security and trust:** An adequate emotional network makes it possible for elderly person to feel that they be well cared for in the future and that what they themselves have decided will be respected.^{5,15}

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- **Sustenance and compassion:** Thinking about maintaining work activity, on the one hand, as well as helping another implies greater well-being in both cases.^{13,15}
- **Productive success:** Older workers bring experience, knowledge, reliability, work ethic, professionalism and loyalty among other good qualities.¹⁶
- **Healthy aging:** Preparing to age successfully requires, in addition to an adequate family network, feeling useful at work, the willingness to sustain regular physical exercises, and adequate diet, and the respect that many of the decisions that will be made be shared with the family network support.^{3,4,15} In this way, higher levels of well-being and strengthened self-esteem will be achieved, key elements for productive and successful aging.

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Conflicts of Interest

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